

Suffolk Coastal Port Health Authority

Sampling Policy

(covering all SCPHA contracted activities)

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Suffolk Coastal Port Health Authority (SCPHA) will carry out sampling of food, feed, water and relevant products to protect public and animal health, and to ensure imports are compliant with import controls.
- 1.2 All sampling activities will be carried out in accordance with legal requirements, current guidance and SCPHA's procedures.
- 1.3 SCPHA will ensure that suitably qualified, trained, competent officers are appointed and authorised to carry out the examination and sampling.
- 1.4 SCPHA will ensure that proper officers (from approved laboratories) are appointed to carry out the examination and analysis.
- 1.5 This policy is supported by [East Suffolk Council's Food and Health and Safety Service Plan](#) which is produced in accordance with [The Framework Agreement](#) on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities.

2. Sampling of food, feed and relevant products

- 2.1 SCPHA will produce an annual sampling plan covering the food and feed products that should be considered for sampling. However, deviations from the plan will always occur as the sampling of food, feed and relevant products must be determined by the following:
 - Requirements of current legislation and associated statutory sampling requirements
 - New legislation coming into force
 - Trends identified from previous sampling activities
 - Intelligence and Risk – the type of product, country of origin, history of compliance of the export/importer etc
 - Local knowledge of the product, e.g. new or unusual
 - Adequacy or sufficiency of documentation received. Sampling may be required to verify assurances on health certificates or investigate discrepancies
 - Suspicion of non-compliance detected during routine inspection
 - Information received from external sources suggesting non-compliance
 - FSA alerts, Early Warning System (EWS) updates and notifications
 - National priorities as directed by FSA and DEFRA
 - Participation in National, Regional or Local Surveys co-ordinated by FSA, UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), or other agencies
- 2.2 SCPHA will endeavor to select consignments at random for sampling unless the legislation or emerging issues requires specific targeted selection.
- 2.3 Every effort will be made to achieve sampling which is representative of the consignment as declared to SCPHA.

3. Water sampling

- 3.1 SCPHA will take samples of drinking water on-board vessels at the request of shipping agents. Samples may also be taken for monitoring purposes. These samples will focus on microbiological quality of the potable water supply.
- 3.2 SCPHA will take samples of water on-board vessels for *Legionella* testing. This may be because of a specific request due to previous sample failures, report of Legionnaires' disease on-board, or a suspected *Legionella* problem on the vessel.
- 3.3 SCPHA will take samples of drinking water from designated drinking water supply points (hydrants) located within the Port of Ipswich at the request of Ipswich Borough Council.

4. Analysis and Examination

- 4.1 All statutory samples and samples taken as a result of suspicion, of imported products will result in detention of the consignment at the Port.
- 4.2 Monitoring programme samples may result in the consignment being detained at the port until results are received or the consignment may be released inland before results are available. A risk assessment will determine what course of action is most appropriate.
- 4.3 Samples for analysis will be submitted to the Public/Agricultural Analyst(s) appointed by the Authority and samples for examination will be submitted to the Food Examiner of the United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Laboratory.
- 4.4 Water samples from vessels and hydrants will be submitted to the UKHSA Laboratory for examination.
- 4.5 For any suspected infectious disease outbreak/health risk onboard a vessel a risk assessment will be carried out in collaboration with the East of England Health Protection Team to determine what sampling, if any, should be conducted by Port Health.
- 4.6 SCPHA will have regard for the opinions of the Food Examiner and Public/Agricultural Analyst for the interpretation of results including all relevant guidance.

5. Resources

- 5.1 Where legislation indicates that all costs in relation to sampling and analysis/examination are recoverable, these fees will be charged in full to the importer or their representative.
- 5.2 Fees for the sampling and examination of ships water will be charged in full to the requester. This does not apply when there is a known/suspected health issue on board a vessel which requires sampling as part of the investigation. Such fees will be discussed and agreed with UKHSA.

5.3 Hydrant water sampling at the Port of Ipswich is carried out using the water testing allocation given to Ipswich Borough Council by UKHSA.

6. Documentation

6.1 SCPHA will inform the declared importer of all samples taken and the results (a copy of the analysis/testing report will be provided to the importer's representative).

6.2 Records of sampling checks will be retained for 3 years.

6.3 Electronic copies of all sample submission forms with which samples are sent to laboratories for examination/analysis shall be retained for 1 year.

6.4 An electronic record of the results of samples sent for examination/analysis shall be retained for 3 years.

7. Contested Results

7.1 Results may be contested in line with Food Standards Agency (FSA) Code of Practice Guidance.

7.2 The procedure to follow shall be published on the SCPHA [website](#).

8. Review

8.1 This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and when there are significant changes to legislation, guidance or activities at any of the ports covered by this policy.

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